

TO:
John Musgrove

EXHIBIT 7
DATE 2/8/07
NO. 527

FROM:
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WoRC Case Manager @ Havre Job Service Workforce Center

RE: HB527

I would like to provide testimony regarding the importance of the changes recommended to HB527 by Representative John Musgrove. I am a WoRC case manager for the Havre Job Service Workforce Center. In my position I work with all clients that receive TANF (cash assistance) through the Office of Public Assistance (welfare office) and are not member of a federally recognized reservation. I was always informed that we are mandatory reporters until the fall of this year when we were instructed that we can not report abuse or neglect until we have e-mailed our monitor with the information. Our monitor then has to forward this onto their legal department. Legal will then e-mail the monitor and the monitor will inform us if we can report or not. MCA was interpreted by the department that we are not mandatory reporters because we do not directly provide services to children, but to the parents. It should be noted that a minor child has to be in the household before an individual is even eligible for TANF!

In the fall of 2006 while enrolling a husband and wife in my program their 6 year old child, who accompanied them, spoke up with the statement "what about my REAL mom & dad". It was discovered (by release of information) that none of the 3 children in the household were enrolled in school and neither was the household approved for home-schooling. After the appointment what the child stated about his "REAL mom & dad" registered and I wanted to report this to the Child Abuse hotline due to the concern about possible abduction. I went through the above process and was informed 2-3 days later that I could not report and that education neglect was not even a reportable event. My supervisor pushed further and finally 1 week after the appointment with the family was informed that I could report. During that week the family moved to another location. This was the 4 location that they had moved to in as many months.

During my 6 years as a case manager I have only had this one event that caused enough concern to warrant me wanting to report. Previous to working at my present position I worked as an administrative assistant and case aide at Havre Child & Family Service. I have spoken with law officials and the supervisor of Havre Child & Family Services and all have told me to just go ahead and just report on my own. Due to confidentiality of my position this violates my job obligations even though I could do so anonymously. Due to DPPHS' interpretation of the MCA and that we work with families and not "children" the process to report has become too lengthy to ensure that the children are protected and that information can still be obtained in a timely manner.

Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address.